CHILDREN'S BOOK
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This book belonged
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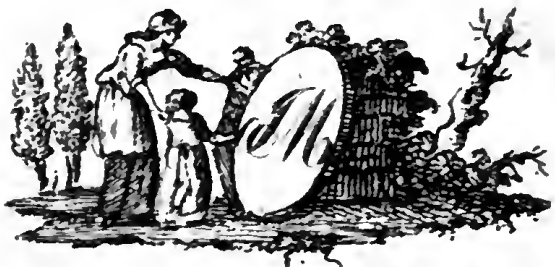
July 26th 1851.

"Why Charles! is it you?

THREE
Village Stories,
Principally designed
for the Use of
Sunday Schools.

BY A LADY.



LONDON.

Printed & sold by John Marshall,
No. 17, Queen Street, Cheapside.
& No. 4 Aldermary Church Yard.

THREE
VILLAGE STORIES, &c.

A ROLLING STONE NEVER GATHERS MOSS; OR, THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF CHARLES RESTLESS.

CHARLES RESTLESS was a ſmart handy lad, of about nineteen, he had lived with farmer *Steady*, as under carter, for near four years, during which time he had behaved himſelf honeſtly and ſoberly: he was apt to be careleſs in the diſcharge of his buſineſs, and ſometimes negligent; but the farmer, who was a conſiderate man, made allowances for the giddineſs of youth; and though he frequently reproved *Charles* for his faults it always was with mildneſs, notwithſtanding which, he obſerved *Charles*, all of a ſudden,

grow ſulky, and inſtead of attending patiently to his reproofs, betrayed an inclination to reply ſaucily.

Farmer *Steady* was very particular in the care he took of his cattle, and all the creatures of different kinds that belonged to his farm: he uſed to ſay, though God had given power to man over every beaſt of the field, it did not appear that man had any right or pretence to ill treat them, or wantonly deſtroy their lives. In conſequence of this way of thinking, his horſes, from being well fed and well littered, were ſtronger, and able to work more and longer than thoſe of other people's who were not ſo well attended to; never being unneceſſarily ſtruck with the whip, or terrified by rough language, they were leſs liable to ſtart, or run away, defects which proceed from timidity rather than from viciouſneſs. The

The cows of his farm were always driven gently to and from the paſture; the pigs and poultry were plentifully fed, and never tormented; in ſhort, all theſe animals prowled peaceably round the farm, and ſeemed to enjoy their exiſtence in the manner nature intended they ſhould.

It was pleaſant to obſerve how the poultry, pigs, pigeons, and dogs promiſcuouſly flocked round the farmer whenever he made his appearance in the farm yard. One evening, as he went into the ſtable he found the horſes ill littered, their feet and legs all covered with dirt as they came from the plough, and no hay in the rack. He called immediately for *Charles*. He was not to be found: in half an hour he came home. Farmer *Steady* then reproached him for his careleſſneſs and cruelty in

neglecting the horſes, and added, if you did not feel for them as animals ſenſible of pain and hunger as yourſelf (though without the means of complaining of your neglect) ſtill you might have conſidered them as part of my property committed to your care, and therefore it was your duty to attend to them. *Charles* ſcratched his head, and muttered between his teeth, "If maſter was not pleaſed—better provide himſelf—year was up—he was ready to go, for the matter of that." The farmer was determined he would not be haſty, therefore he diſregarded theſe half-uttered ſentences, and after having ſtood by whilſt *Charles* ſerved the horſes, ſent him to-bed without further altercation.

The next morning *Charles* came up to the farmer and ſaid, "Pleaſe, Maſter, to get a new man." "How now, *Charles!*

Charles! why do you want to quit my ſervice? have not I been an indulgent and good maſter to you?" "Why, yes, to be ſure he had; but he wanted to better himſelf." "How better yourſelf, *Charles?*" "Why, get more wages and leſs work." "Certainly," ſaid the farmer, "that would be bettering yourſelf; but what if in the end you were to get more work and leſs wages?" "Of that he was not afraid, and go he would." The farmer finding it was to no purpoſe to argue with him, and feeling unwilling to keep a ſervant againſt his inclination, paid him his wages, and bid him farewel, telling him to remember the old ſaying: *A rolling ſtone never gathers moſs.*" *Charles* paid no attention to his maſter's laſt words, but having packed up his cloaths in a bundle, he ſlung it on a ſtick acroſs

his ſhoulder, and was walking over the grounds pretty briſkly, when he met *Mary*, the dairy maid; ſhe had been abſent a few days with her friends, who lived ſome miles off. *Mary* came into the farmer's ſervice at the ſame time with *Charles*, ſhe was a neat tidy looking girl. *Charles* had taken a fancy to her, and ſhe, on her part, was ſincerely attached to him; in the village they were looked upon as ſweethearts, and it was thought in time they would be aſked in the church. Very different were their ſenſations at this meeting. *Mary*, whoſe whole heart and affections were fixed on *Charles*, expreſſed, in her ſmiling countenance, the moſt ſincere pleaſure at ſeeing him. *Charles*, whoſe affection for *Mary* was not ſtrong enough to counterbalance the number of projects he had in his head for his future

advancement

advancement in life, would gladly have avoided meeting her; he looked confuſed and diſtreſſed, and but ill requited the kindneſs with which ſhe greeted him. She aſked him if he had come out on purpoſe to meet her? "But no," ſaid ſhe, recollecting herſelf, "that bundle on your ſhoulder convinces me you are going farther; when do you come back again?" "I don't know," ſaid *Charles*, with much embarraſſment, "perhaps—very ſoon; but make haſte home, *Mary*, it grows late; maſter will ſcold if you don't get in before it is dark," ſo ſaying, he coldly ſhook her hand, and trudged on as faſt as his legs would carry him. Poor *Mary*, not underſtanding what all this could mean, fell a crying, and came into the farm yard wiping her tears with her apron. Farmer *Steady* ſoon diſcovered

covered the cauſe of her ſorrow, and by degrees, told her *Charles* was gone to ſeek his fortune, that ſhe had better forget him, as he was a thoughtleſs lad not worth her notice. *Mary* wept as if her heart would break, and for a long, long time regretted the loſs of her lover, to whom we ſhall now return.

Charles was not void of feeling, and the ſmall portion of affection he felt for *Mary* was increaſed, by obſerving the diſtreſs his behaviour had occaſioned her. For the next two miles as he advanced on his journey he was tempted to turn back again, make his peace with the farmer, marry *Mary*, and ſettle in his village; but before he came to any reſolution he was overtaken by a ſtage coach, and, without further reflection, he bargained with the coachman to take

him

him as an outſide paſſenger the next two ſtages for a couple of ſhillings. It was eleven o'clock when the coach arrived at the town to which *Charles* had engaged a paſſage; the company in the coach were to ſup at the inn. *Charles*, who had left his former place without any plan as to his future ſettlement, began now to reflect what was to become of him. He ſat down in a corner of the kitchen, and having pulled out of a little canvaſs bag the two ſhillings he was to pay for his fare, he ſorrowfully told over his money, and found himſelf worth only eighteen ſhillings and ſeven-pence. Hitherto he had always been uſed to have a plentiful ſupper provided for him, he now was aware he muſt pay for whatever he called for; conſcious that his means were low, he ventured no further than

to

to aſk for a pot of beer and ſome bread and cheeſe, to this meal he ſat down in ſolitude; for though the kitchen was full of people, moving about, and talking briſkly of their own affairs, ſtill were they all unmindful of *Charles*. He now began to regret the ſociety of the farm, the idea of *Mary* ſhot into his mind, he felt remorſe that he had deceived her, but ſtill the hopes of bettering himſelf, and making his fortune, operated too powerfully on him to allow him to think of returning; mean time the coach was again going to ſet forward, and whilſt *Charles* was deliberating whether he ſhould or ſhould not proceed on the top of it, crack went the whip, and it drove from the door, ſo he was fain to agree for a lodging at the inn; he was ſhewn into a ſmall room with three truckle beds, two were occupied by ſome carriers,

and

and the third was for him. Had *Charles* been diſpoſed to ſleep the ſnoring of his companions would have prevented him, but at day-break they left their beds to proceed on their journey. *Charles* lay for a few hours, and when he aroſe he went into the inn yard, where obſerving the oſtler with many low bows ſhutting the door of a chaiſe and four, and ſeeing the gentleman in it throw him out a ſhilling, he thought to himſelf, if he could be an oſtler he ſhould ſoon make his fortune. Without more ado he goes to the oſtler, and offers his ſervice to aſſiſt in the care of the horſes.

"Why," ſaid the oſtler "I knows nothing of thee, mon; howſomedever, let a body zee what thee canſt do. 'Twas but yeſterday our *Joe* ran away, and, mayhap, thou mayeſt tread in his ſhoes. *Charles* was willing to ſhew his

his handy work; he had been uſed to the care of horſes at the farm, but he knew nothing of the chaiſe harneſs; the miſtakes he made at firſt cauſed the oſtler to laugh in his face, calling him lubberly plough-boy. *Charles* was not of a very patient temper, nevertheleſs, he reſtrained his anger, and the oſtler finding him willing to learn, (though he took but little pains to teach him) ſpoke to his maſter, and he was eſtabliſhed in the inn as under oſtler. Here he led a very laborious life, ſmall were his profits, and conſtant was his work. Six months paſſed away, during which time he made acquaintance with ſome gentlemen's ſervants in the town, and, by means of one of them, he was recommended as a ſtable boy in Mr. *Jolly*'s family. This gentleman was a determined fox hunter, and kept many fine hunters,

hunters, on which he beſtowed the greateſt care and attention. As he frequently went into the ſtable he ſaw *Charles*, was pleaſed with his appearance, and promoted him to be his groom.

In this ſervice *Charles* might have lived with tolerable comfort, but the idea of bettering himſelf was ſtill uppermoſt in his mind, and now he wiſhed to be a footman. Upon ſome ſlight pretence he gave his maſter warning, and got himſelf recommended to a Mrs. *Mildmay*, a very reſpectable, worthy woman, whoſe family was conducted with great order and regularity.

The tranquility of this houſe, oppoſed to the noiſe and riot of 'ſquire *Jolly*'s, ſo far from pleaſing *Charles* was irkſome to him, and he ſoon left his place: in ſhort, in the ſix following

years he had no leſs than eight places. From his ſo frequently changing no one liked to take him into their ſervice, and he was reduced to enliſt as a ſoldier.

Though military diſcipline appeared inſufferably hard to him, it was to no purpoſe to complain; but in his deſpair he took to drinking, this, together with conſtant vexation and uneaſineſs of mind, brought him into an ill ſtate of health, and being incapable of doing his duty, at the end of three years he received his diſcharge. All he had for it now was to return to his pariſh. The colonel of the regiment very humanely gave him a couple of guineas to bear his expences on the road, for, alas! he was full many a mile from his village.

He took a place in a waggon for the firſt day's journey, and then proceeded ſlowly on foot. The ninth day (which

was

was *Sunday*) he got within ten miles of home, his money was all gone, he found himſelf ſo exhauſted for want of food, that he determined to beg charity at a ſmall white houſe that was by the road ſide; the houſe lay behind a neat little garden, and at the door ſtood a woman dreſſed in her *Sunday*'s cloaths, in her arms ſhe held a little infant, and near her ſtood two children of four and five years old. *Charles*, who had been unuſed to beg, ſcarcely raiſed his eyes from the ground when he pulled off his hat and aſked a ſmall relief, but how was his diſtreſs increaſed when he heard a voice, the tone of which he thought he remembered, exclaim, "Why, *Charles!* is it you? He looked up, and beheld *Mary*. She coloured, but, to hide her confuſion, ran into the houſe and fetched him out ſome beer and ſome cold

meat, and bid him eat and be welcome. His heart was too full to ſpeak, he drank a little of the beer, and putting the proviſions into his wallet, made a bow, and haſtening into the road, never ſtopped till he arrived in his village.

It was about one o'clock, the church ſervice was juſt over, the bells were ringing merrily, and all the villagers were returning to their houſes. *Charles*'s perſon was conſiderably altered in the courſe of his twelve years' abſence; his face was haggard and pale from ſickneſs, and he looked paler too from the emotion of his unexpected interview with *Mary:* in ſhort, he was ſo totally altered, that none of his former friends and neighbours recollected him.

Farmer *Steady*, ſeeing a man in a ragged uniform coat, walked up to him, and giving him ſix-pence, ſaid; "My friend,

friend, I am not a rich man, yet it is but juſt, according to my way of thinking, to beſtow a ſmall matter to relieve the diſtreſs of one, who, by his profeſſion, protects our property at the hazard of his life; take this trifle to drink the king's health."

Charles burſt into tears, and cried out, "Why, Maſter, don't you know me?" "Know you!" ſaid farmer *Steady*, "as I live and breathe it is *Charles Reſtleſs!*" "Ah, Maſter! truly have I repented not following your good advice. I have met with nothing but ſorrows, diſappointments, and mortifications ſince I left your ſervice." Cheer up, my lad," ſaid *Steady*, "come home with me, and let us try what can be done for you." *Charles* thankfully accepted the farmer's invitation, and in the courſe of the evening told him all his adventures. The

farmer did not oppreſs him with ſevere reproofs, but kindly compaſſionated his ſufferings.

Charles was anxious to hear ſomething of *Mary*, yet knew not how to inquire. At length the farmer aſked him if he had forgotten his old love? (without waiting for an anſwer) "Ah! poor ſoul," added he, "ſhe took on ſadly after you was gone; for four years ſhe expected your return; but hearing nothing of you, ſhe concluded you had forgotten her, and at length ſhe married *Samuel Meanwell*, an honeſt young man, who, from his great diligence and ſobriety, two years ago got to be made bailiff at 'ſquire *Worthy*'s. Since then *Samuel* and his wife live in clover; they have got a nice houſe by the road ſide. The 'ſquire and his lady, who are very charitable good people,

people, are always doing kind things by them. Madam herſelf ſtood god-mother to their laſt child. *Mary* is the beſt of wives, and loves her huſband dearly." Here *Charles* fetched a deep ſigh; which the farmer obſerving, ſaid: "Never grieve, my lad, try to recover your health and ſpirits, and don't lament a loſs that can be ſo eaſily repaired; wives, and good ones too, are to be had in plenty at all times and ſeaſons. But what can be done for you? With your ſtable waiting, and table waiting, and your ſwords and your muſkets, have you forgot to handle the plough?" "Why no, Maſter; but I am too weak at preſent to earn my bread." "Well, we will ſee what the pariſh will do for you."

Accordingly the farmer applied to the overſeers, and got an allowance for *Charles*; moreover, he kindly permitted

him

him to ſleep at the farm, and often gave him a hearty meal. In a couple of months *Charles* recovered his health. At firſt he worked for the farmers in the yard lands, but when he regained his ſtrength he got conſtant employ as a labourer, and ſubſiſted very comfortably on his earnings. In two year's time he in a great meaſure recovered his ſpirits, and farmer *Steady* obſerving he was now ſatisfied in his ſituation, took occaſion to remark on his former follies. "Had you, *Charles*, been ſatisfied with the condition in which Providence had placed you, you would never have waſted twelve of the beſt years of your life in ſeeking ſituations you were not qualified to fill. You have learnt, by ſad experience, the folly of ſuch purſuits: had you invariably remained in your village, and made the moſt of the advantages

of

of your ſituation, you would have been a happier man than you now are; you would have avoided many ſcenes of diſtreſs and miſery, that were not only painful to you at the time, but which you can never think of hereafter without regretting the folly by which you expoſed yourſelf to them. Tell your tale to others, and let them learn by your example, that, *A rolling ſtone never gathers moſs.*"

THE MISCHIEFS OF GOSSIPPING; OR, THE HISTORY OF DAME PRATE-A-PACE, AND HER GRANDDAUGHTER BRIDGET.

DAME *Prate-a-pace* was a widow of about ſixty years old, ſhe was frugal, honeſt, and ſober, and would have been a uſeful and reſpectable member of ſociety but for one failing, which was, an immoderate love of talking; ſhe would chatter from ſun riſe to ſun ſet: it may appear ſevere to condemn as a fault, what appears at firſt ſight only a trifling defect in a character, yet to this defect may be attributed many ſerious misfortunes which befel Dame *Prate-a-pace* in the courſe of her life. That we may the more clearly prove the truth of our aſſertion, it will be neceſſary

neceſſary to trace the old dame's hiſtory back to the earlier period of her life.

Her huſband died when ſhe was thirty years old, leaving her with five young children, and a ſufficient competency to have ſupported them comfortably in their humble ſtation of life, had ſhe been as diligent as ſhe was frugal; but the love of talking ſo prevailed in her diſpoſition, that it ſeemed to ſuperſede every obligation of duty, and every ſentiment of affection; ſhe daily ſauntered up and down the village with a ſtocking on her arm (which ſhe pretended to be darning) leaving her children to the care of a young pariſh girl whom ſhe had hired as a ſervant; as they grew older ſhe directed this girl to take them to ſchool, and here indeed they were taught to read; but of what avails a little inſtruction at

ſchool,

ſchool, if the morals and diſpoſitions of children are not attended to at home! In ſuch attentions Dame *Prate-a-pace* was ſhamefully negligent, indeed her habits of goſſiping from houſe to houſe took up ſo much of the day, that ſhe had not leiſure to diſcharge her domeſtic duties, and her children were almoſt entirely neglected by her; whilſt they were little they were dirty and humourſome, as they grew bigger they became idle and miſchievous; the boys grew up indolent and drunken, the girls lazy and impertinent; ſo far from being a comfort to their mother in her old age, they cauſed her nothing but vexations. It is not, however, our intention to trace their ſeparate adventures, we ſhall only mention the eldeſt ſon, who married a ſober young girl in the pariſh, to whom he behaved extremely

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ill for ſome years, and at length having from drunkenneſs contracted debts which he could not pay, he ran away, leaving his poor wife with three young children to provide for.

Notwithſtanding his bad behaviour to her ſhe was attached to him, and was heart-broken at finding herſelf ſo cruelly deſerted by him, yet ſhe ſtruggled hard to ſupport herſelf and her children, and for two or three years got on pretty well, ſhe then unfortunately got the ſmall-pox, of which ſhe and two of her children died. *Bridget*, the youngeſt, recovered, and was taken care of by her grandmother; the old dame was doatingly fond of her, and meant to do every thing which was kind by her; but her propenſity for talking (a vice which unhappily increaſes with age) coun-

teracted all her good intentions. Inſtead of inſtructing *Bridget* in what might have made her a tidy ſervant, or a notable wife, the old woman uſed to take her about goſſipping in the village. Many hours did they loſe every day ſauntering from houſe to houſe, hearing all that was ſaid, and repeating all they heard, and of courſe making many quarrels and diſputes amongſt the neighbours. *Bridget* naturally preferred this idle life to ſpinning or knitting; ſhe was withal good-humoured, had a reaſonable ſhare of common ſenſe, and was a very handſome girl, no wonder therefore as ſhe grew up that ſhe was admired. Young *Simon Jenkins* courted her for his wife, and it would have been an exceedingly good match for her, but old farmer *Jenkins*, aware of the indolent manner in which

which ſhe had been brought up, and having a great diſlike to the goſſiping character of Dame *Prate-a-pace*, interpoſed, and forbid his ſon to think any more about *Bridget*.

No ſooner had the old dame heard this than ſhe grew outrageous againſt the old farmer: the volubility of her tongue got the better of her reaſon, and inſtead of behaving quietly and patiently, and thereby perhaps bringing matters about again, what did ſhe do but abuſe the *Jenkinſſes* in the groſſeſt manner, inventing all manner of ſtories againſt them; to be ſure ſhe only whiſpered them, conſcious they were not true; but ſecrets communicated to twenty or thirty people are hardly ever kept. *Bridget*, in imitation of her grandmother, chattered away at a great rate amonſt the young people, and abuſed

the *Jenkinſſes* moſt ſhamefully; in ſhort, ſhe was evidently more angered than hurt at her diſappointment, yet ſome of her young friends that really loved her, pitied her, others, that were envious of her good fortune, rejoiced; but, I am ſorry to add, all joined in laughing at the abſurdity of her behaviour. Her grandmother had well nigh got into a ſad ſcrape; it having been reported to old farmer *Jenkins* that Dame *Prate-a-pace* had ſaid he was a diſhoneſt man, he threatened to bring an action againſt her for defamation, ſhe was, however, perſuaded to go and aſk his pardon, which he kindly granted her; but ſhe was ſorely vexed at the diſgrace ſhe had been expoſed to, for the ſtory had made much talk, and was well known throughout the pariſh, and young *Jenkins* happening himſelf ſoon after

after to overhear *Bridget* abuſing him, concluded ſhe would make but a ſhrewiſh kind of wife, and gave up all thoughts of her, and ſoon after married a ſober young woman whom his father recommended.

This was a grievous diſappointment to the old dame and her grand-daughter, and it was long before they got the better of it. Happy would it have been had it corrected in them both the inordinate love of goſſiping; but though it was checked for a time, it burſt forth again. In a few weeks they reſumed their habit of ſauntering from houſe to houſe, prying into ſecrets, and revealing in one houſe what they had ſeen and heard in another, and conſtantly raiſing diſturbances; mean time *Bridget* was ſeeking for a place; ſhe was too well known as a buſy-body

in her own village to hope for a ſervice, but ſhe wrote to an aunt of her's who lived at ſome diſtance, and ſhe recommended her to the houſekeeper at the Rev. Mr. *Strictly*'s, where ſhe was placed as nurſery maid.

Mr. and Mrs. *Strictly* were very reſpectable good people, and in their family ſhe might have lived very happily: ſhe was careful in diſcharging the duties of her place, and her good-humour and attention to the children pleaſed Mrs. *Strictly* ſo much, that *Bridget* ſoon became a favourite. No ſooner did ſhe perceive the partiality ſhewn her by her miſtreſs, than, by way of increaſing it, ſhe officiouſly began telling tales of the other ſervants: as theſe tales were moſtly without any foundation, and as Mrs. *Strictly* greatly diſliked all quarrels and altercations in her family, ſhe

ſhe immediately diſcharged *Bridget*, and as thoſe who ſpeak ill of others make many enemies, ſcandalous were the cauſes aſſigned for her ſudden diſmiſſion; ſome ſaid ſhe had ſtolen the children's frocks; others that ſhe had taken ſome money off a table; others, that ſhe had taken to dram-drinking; and, as ill news flies faſt, all theſe reports preceded her arrival in the village, and the old dame heard them all from one and t'other, and her heart was well nigh broken when *Bridget* herſelf appeared, and juſtified her conduct; but it would have been of little avail, had not Mrs. *Strictly* by chance heard of thoſe ſtories, and being a candid and a juſt woman, ſhe wrote a letter to the grandmother, aſſerting *Bridget* was not diſmiſſed for diſhoneſty or for drunkenneſs, but that ſhe was a goſſip

and

and a tale bearer, and would have made miſchief in her family, therefore ſhe had diſcharged her.

Such a character from a perſon of Mrs. *Strictly*'s integrity, a character too which had been too clearly proved in other inſtances, made it hopeleſs to place *Bridget* in any ſervice, ſo ſhe was compelled to remain at home, ſpin in the winter, and work in the fields in harveſt time. Thus ſhe lived for ſix years, when old Dame *Prate-a-pace* died.

Bridget was now three or four and twenty, and left entirely to take care of herſelf: ſhe endeavoured to make amends for her paſt follies by bridling her tongue; but the habit of goſſiping is difficult to be got the better of, however, ſhe behaved tolerably well in this reſpect, and being ſtill very well looking,

looking, *John Surly*, a carter, an honeſt ſober man, but ſomewhat rough in his temper, offered to marry her; ſhe accepted his propoſals, and they were married ſoon after. He took her home to his family, for he lived with his mother, a decrepid old woman, and his ſiſter, a ſingle woman about forty.

Bridget did not much like her new relations; ſhe made ſome ſlight attempts to ſpread diſſention amongſt them, but *John*, well aware of her character, adviſed her as mildly as he could (which, truth to ſay, was ſomewhat roughly) to beware how ſhe endeavoured, by her chattering, to make miſchief in his family. *Bridget* was nettled at his reproof, and when *John* was out of the way ſhe behaved ſo unkindly to the poor old woman, that ſhe was forced to complain to her ſon. *Bridget* proteſted

teſted ſhe had done all that lay in her power to pleaſe the old woman, but ſhe was never ſatisfied. *John*, who knew his mother to be of a very quiet eaſy temper, believed not a word that *Bridget* ſaid againſt her, but flew into a paſſion, and threatened, if ſhe ever behaved unkindly to his mother again he would make her repent of it. *Bridget*, who knew not what ſhe was to expect from theſe violent threats, was very much frightened, and for a ſhort time conducted herſelf, to all appearance, ſo well that they lived very comfortably.

John's ſiſter was a meek inoffenſive woman, ſhe not only worked hard to maintain herſelf, but now they lived ſo happily, ſhe was ever ready to aſſiſt *Bridget* in the management of the houſe: of this *Bridget* in a little time took an unfair advantage, and would often

often leave all the care and trouble on her ſiſter, whilſt ſhe went prating about the village. It happened one night, when *John* came from plough, that he found no ſupper; his ſiſter told him the greens were boiled, but that *Bridget* had been out two hours to fetch a bit of meat, and that ſhe had been waiting all that time for her return. *John*, whoſe anger was perhaps ſharpened by hunger, ſnatched up his hat, and, without more ado, went into the ſtreet, he heard *Bridget*'s voice at a neighbour's houſe, where ſhe was vociferating very loudly, and he plainly overheard her ſay, ſhe led the life of a dog; that mother was never ſatisfied, and that more than once *John* had beat her. "'Tis falſe,' cried *John*, burſting into the room, "I never offered to ſtrike her in my life; I am not ſuch a coward

as

as to beat a woman neither; but I tell you once for all, *Bridget*, if you won't ſtay at home and mind your buſineſs, and leave off goſſiping with your neighbours, I will turn you out of doors, and you may ſhift for yourſelf; but if you will behave quietly and ſoberly, as other wives do, I am very ready to kiſs and be friends, on condition you contradict what you have ſaid of mother and me, and aſk pardon for having ſaid it, for you know not a word of it is true."

Bridget was ſo frightened at the ſudden appearance of *John*, and the angry look he put on, that ſhe ſtood trembling and ſobbing, and could not ſpeak a word, but ſhe walked towards the door, and ſeemed inclined to go home with him; however, he would not let her proceed till ſhe had recovered her ſpeech enough

enough to aſk his pardon, and aſſure her neighbours ſhe had belied both him and his mother; but if he would forgive her this once, ſhe would never offend him in future. It coſt her a great deal to make this public ſubmiſſion; but it anſwered a good purpoſe, as ſhe afterwards behaved much better. Staying at home and working were irkſome to her at firſt, and ſhe uſed to ſit and cry day after day, but *John* was of too rough a nature to be melted by her tears; he knew, from experience, nothing but keeping her at home would preſerve peace, not only in his own houſe, but in the village, for if ſhe once got out ſhe would again fall into her habit of goſſiping.

After this laſt adventure ſhe behaved more diſcreetly, yet was her character for tale-bearing ſo eſtabliſhed, that

whenever an idle ſtory was circulated in the village, people would laugh and ſay, 'I warrant you this is *one of goſſip* Bridget's *tales*.'

Thus did this woman, though ſhe bore a good character, from this ſingle failing (which is indeed a failing of a very miſchievous tendency) get herſelf laughed at, and deſpiſed by all her neighbours. Learn, from her example, to be prudent and diſcreet in your diſcourſe, never officiouſly meddle in the affairs of other people, which do not concern you. Avoid the habit of immoderate talking, which is generally importunate and troubleſome, at beſt a waſte of time, and frequently productive of miſchief to others as well as to yourſelf.

THE REWARDS OF HONEST INDUSTRY; OR, THE HISTORY OF THOMAS AND JENNY MEADOWS.

THOMAS MEADOWS was the youngeſt ſon of *John Meadows*, a day-labourer, an honeſt and reſpectable man; for reſpect is not the attribute of any particular rank in life, it is juſtly due to every man who conducts himſelf with propriety in the ſituation in which Providence has thought fit to place him; and ſuch was the caſe of *John Meadows*; he had married early in life, and bred up a numerous family of children in the habits of ſobriety, ſtrict honeſty, and aſſiduous induſtry.

Thomas, whoſe hiſtory I am about to write, at the age of twenty-two, with his father's conſent and approbation, married *Jenny Fairfield*, a worthy young woman, who, like her huſband, had been well brought up.

The parents on both ſides could give their children but a ſmall portion of money, juſt ſufficient to fit up the cottage they were to live in; their daily labour was to procure their maintenance. *Thomas* was active and laborious; the diligence and faithfulneſs with which he did the work aſſigned him, ſecured him conſtant employment, and made all the farmers deſirous of having him in their ſervice; for *Thomas* was not like too many others, an eye-ſerving man, whether he was or was not over-looked he was equally diligent; on a principle of conſcience, he felt he had no right to receive wages

for

for work he neglected, and frequently was his diligence rewarded by a cup of good ale, or a ſix-pence extraordinary given by his maſter at the end of the week.

Jenny, on her part, was no leſs induſtrious; ſhe ſpun great part of the day, ſhe kept her houſe clean and neat, and was always dreſſed tidily; one of her pleaſanteſt occupations was to provide her huſband with a comfortable meal when he came in from his work; and ſhe always received him with cheerfulneſs and good-humour, this rendered his home ſo pleaſant to him, that he never felt diſpoſed to go to the alehouſe. Whilſt they were eating their homely ſupper they uſed to make ſeveral arrangements for the future: they at this period earned nine ſhillings a week between them, they agreed it would be prudent to ſet aſide a little of

this money againſt a rainy day, they calculated they could live on ſeven ſhillings a week. When harveſt came on of courſe they earned a great deal more, for they worked by the acre, and *Jenny* was a notable reaper.

There was a piece of waſte ground behind their houſe, this *Thomas* fenced round of evenings after he came from work, then he digged it up, and put ſome potatoes, and cabbages, and ſome pot-herbs in it. He contrived to get a ſwarm of bees, and theſe increaſing in two or three years, they had a good ſtock of bees. He heard of the double hives, by which he found he could take nearly twice the quantity of honey, without deſtroying the poor bees who ſo induſtriouſly laboured to make it.

Thomas and *Jenny* were much reſpected and beloved by all the good people

people in the village; for though they lived much at home, and were never ſeen goſſiping and ſauntering about the ſtreet, waſting their own time, and intruding on that of other people, ſtill were they very neighbourly, and ready to call on any of their friends that were ſick, or that in any diſtreſs required their attendance.

They were very exact in going to church, and ſometimes *Sunday* afternoon they would go and viſit *John Meadows*, or *William Fairfield* (*Jenny*'s father,) the two families uſed to meet at one of their houſes, and here they paſſed the evening in cheerful converſation.

Thus happily did *John* and *Jenny* live for ſeveral years; they had four children, and *Jenny* expected ſoon to lie-in of the fifth; but misfortunes now were about to befal them. It

was

was the middle of ſummer, and the ſeaſon for haymaking: *Jenny*, from her ſituation, could not work in the field. One evening, as ſhe was ſitting at her door, a farmer in the neighbourhood gave her ſome broad beans; theſe ſhe knew *Thomas* was particularly fond of, ſo ſhe ſat down at the cottage door and made her two eldeſt children aſſiſt in ſhelling them, whilſt the two little ones played upon the ground. Poor *Jenny* pleaſed herſelf with the thoughts of boiling theſe beans with a bit of bacon for her huſband's ſupper. Night drew on and he did not return; ſhe put the two little children to-bed, allowing the others to ſit up to ſupper. Still *Thomas* did not appear, and *Jenny* began to grow very uneaſy, at laſt, whilſt ſhe was ſtanding by the chimney to ſee if the pot boiled, the eldeſt boy ſaid, 'There runs grandfather

Meadows

Meadows as faſt as he can run.' 'Which way?' cried *Jenny*, frightened at ſhe knew not what. 'Oh! a great way off, all acroſs the fields,' ſaid the little boy. Poor *Jenny*'s mind miſgave her; ſhe ran to the door, and ſaw at diſtance a crowd of people carrying ſomething like a hurdle, it immediately occurred to her ſome misfortune had befallen *Thomas*, ſhe ran ſcreaming into the ſtreet, and brought out ſeveral of the neighbours, mean time the crowd advanced, and, ſure enough, it was poor *Thomas* they were bringing, he had fallen from the top of a hayrick and had broken his leg; the exquiſite pain he ſuffered made him look pale and ghaſtly; at ſight of his altered looks *Jenny* fell into fits, the neighbours carried her home, her fright haſtened on her labour, and ſhe was

ſoon

ſoon delivered of a dead child; mean while *Thomas*, attended by his father, (who wept as if his heart would break) was brought into the kitchen, where a bed was put up for him, and a ſurgeon ſent for to ſet his leg; but great was the diſtreſs in the family, the good women in the pariſh were aſſembled round *Jenny*, who, in the midſt of all her ſufferings, expreſſed the moſt anxious ſolicitude for her huſband; they had the prudence to conceal the accident from her, only telling he had been ſeized with a fit from over working himſelf, but he would ſoon be well. She was pacified with this account for the preſent, but the next day ſhe renewed her inquiries, ſaying, ſhe was certain if her huſband was not very bad indeed he would come and ſee her: in ſhort, her mother, who was a very reaſonable old woman,

woman, undertook to tell *Jenny* the truth in ſo gentle a manner, that it ſhould not materially hurt her, at leaſt ſhe thought the anxiety ſhe expreſſed at not ſeeing him might be more fatal to her, ſo ſhe began by ſaying, *Thomas* had been hurt by a fall, and, by degrees, told her he had broken his leg, but that it was ſet, and that there was every reaſon to hope he would in time get quite well.

Poor *Jenny* was a good deal affected by this intelligence at firſt, but after a little time ſhe grew compoſed, and was truly thankful her huſband had not been killed; for he had fallen from a very high rick upon ſome pitching.

In a few weeks *Jenny* got about again, but ſhe was very feeble, and ſo taken up with attending on her huſband, that ſhe had little leiſure to mind her ſpinning.

Thomas

Thomas did not ſoon get well of his accident; indeed he never entirely recovered the uſe of his leg, nor was he able to work ſo hard as he had done, mean time here was a long bill owing to the ſurgeon; he was a humane and a conſiderate man, therefore not only he charged his attendance as low as he poſſibly could, but he even retrenched a fifth of his bill, ſtill medicines and attendacce for two months came to near ſix pounds. Alas! this exceeded the little ſum *Thomas* and *Jenny* had ſcraped up, but their parents aſſiſted them as far as they could, which was but little, as they were only labourers; however, amongſt them the ſum was made up, and the bill paid, to the great ſatisfaction of theſe good people, for they were both ſo ſtrictly honeſt, they would have parted with every thing they had rather than have made debts.

Thomas uſed to ſay, he never could call any money his own whilſt he knew he owed it to other people; and though from his known honeſty he would have had credit given him, he never would contract any debts. Now he and his wife were left, as it were, without a ſhilling to begin the world again, with the diſadvantages of *Thomas* being lame, and *Jenny* grown weak and ſickly, ſtill they were never heard to murmur or complain, the grateful cheerfulneſs with which they uſed to talk of their happier days, and the patient reſignation with which they yielded to their reverſe of fortune, made them beloved and reſpected by every body.

There lived, a few miles from this village, an elderly gentleman of moderate fortune, who was very kind

in aſſiſting the ſober and induſtrious poor, but he was no leſs ſevere in diſcountenancing the profligate and idle. It happened this gentleman heard of *Thomas*'s accident from the ſurgeon who attended him, and hearing him at the ſame time give *Thomas* an excellent character, he determined he would go and ſee him. Accordingly, one fine autumn morning, as *Jenny* was cleaning out her houſe, ſhe ſaw ſquire *Mildmay* ride into the village; he came up to her door, and giving his horſe to his groom, entered into converſation with *Jenny*; he aſked her ſeveral queſtions reſpecting her huſband's accident, to theſe ſhe replied reſpectfully, but avoided entering into long details; ſhe was well aware it would be both impertinent and tireſome in her unneceſſarily to take up the time

of

of a perſon, who ſo kindly condeſcended to take an intereſt in her concerns, ſhe contented herſelf therefore with ſimply anſwering the queſtions addreſſed to her, without ſubjoining any remarks of her own.

This modeſt diſcretion of ſpeech was highly approved of by Mr. *Mildmay*, he was alſo much pleaſed with the affection ſhe expreſſed for her huſband: he called her four children (who were all taken up looking at his horſe) giving to each a ſhilling, and, bidding *Jenny* good-morrow, he rode away, ſaying, he would call again ſoon.

The children of courſe gave the money to their mother. Four ſhillings coming ſo unexpectedly were very acceptable; ſhe recollected there was a ſhilling owing to the ſhoemaker for

mending ſhoes, this ſhe went and paid directly, with another ſhilling ſhe bought a bit of bacon, which, together with ſome greens ſhe cut in the garden, ſhe knew would make a comfortable meal for *Thomas* when he came home, and this time ſhe was not diſappointed, he came in ſoon after ſix in the evening, tired and fatigued; for though he exerted himſelf to do his work he was ſtill very weak and reduced, and labouring hard was more than he could well bear, and ſince his accident they, from being reduced in circumſtances, were obliged to live more frugally, and he often ſupped on only a piece of bread and cheeſe. When he came in and ſaw the pot on the fire, he appeared pleaſed, and *Jenny*, with a ſmiling countenance, told him of ſquire *Mildmay*'s viſit,

and

and how he had given each of the children a ſhilling, "and," added ſhe, "ſince 'tis with the children's money the ſupper was bought, 'tis but fair they ſhould partake of it, ſo they all ſat down together, and made a very comfortable ſupper, after which they drank the ſquire's health in a draught of ſmall beer; for they were always grateful to their benefactors.

When the children were gone to-bed *Thomas* and *Jenny* began to conjecture what the ſquire could mean by ſaying he would call again, they ſuppoſed it was to do ſome kind thing by them, for though he was a very unaſſuming man, yet, in a quiet way, he did a great deal of good; but it was in vain for them to gueſs what he meant to do for them. Mean time a week paſſed and he did not call. *Jenny* felt ſorry; but

ſhe was aware ſhe had no right to complain; ſhe had already received four ſhillings from him, and ſhe was not of that graſping nature that might have diſpoſed her to think, becauſe a kind friend relieves her once that ſhe was to expect more from the ſame quarter; in ſhort, another week paſſed, and *Jenny* began to give up all hopes of again ſeeing her kind benefactor, when one day as ſhe was ſpinning, and her children learning their ſpelling, in came Mr. *Mildway*, up ſtarted the children, and down tumbled the books. *Jenny*, out of reſpect, left off ſpinning, and handing a chair to Mr. *Mildmay*, aſked if he would pleaſe to be ſeated? he on his part deſired ſhe would ſit down, as he wanted to have ſome converſation with her: he then aſked her ſeveral queſtions

queſtions reſpecting her education, and found ſhe had been very well brought up, that ſhe could read very well, and had herſelf taught all her children to read, he then propoſed to her to come with her huſband and family and ſettle in his village; he ſaid they ſhould live rent free in a cottage near his houſe, that he would allow her five pounds a year for teaching ſix boys and ſix girls to read, that ſhe and her huſband might alſo keep the *Sunday* ſchool, and moreover he would employ *Thomas* to work in his grounds, and that he would take care he ſhould never want employment, or ever be put upon very hard work;—that ſhe might, perhaps, get many day-ſcholars in the village, but every thing would depend on her diligence and attention, and if he himſelf was ſatisfied with their behaviour

behaviour many other advantages might occur; in ſhort, he bid her conſult with her huſband, and in three days let him know their determination. He now roſe to depart, but, ſeeming to recollect himſelf, he ſaid, with a ſmile of the moſt benevolent gentleneſs; "I have "been hindering your ſpinning, and "I muſt in juſtice make you amends," ſo he put his hand in his pocket and took out two half crowns, which he gave her; *Jenny* thanked him very heartily, and, raiſing her eyes to heaven, prayed for bleſſings on his head for his goodneſs to her.

As ſoon as *Thomas* came in ſhe told him all that had paſſed between her and the ſquire. *Thomas* went directly to his father's, and ſhe went to her's, the parents on both ſides agreed the young people could not do better than accept this

this kind offer. On the day appointed *Thomas* put on his beſt cloaths and waited on the ſquire, and in three months they packed up their goods in a waggon, and, after taking leave of their neighbours with tearful eyes, they went to the village of *Oatley*. They firſt ſtopped at the ſquire's houſe to inquire whereabouts their cottage was, he walked with them, that he might enjoy their ſurpriſe, for in entering it they found it almoſt completely furniſhed. Mr. *Mildmay* had obſerved the furniture they had was but indifferent, and ſince poor *Thomas*'s accident they had been too poor to buy any new; moreover, this houſe was much larger than the one they had left, ſo that their furniture, had it been ever ſo good, would have been inſufficient in point of quantity.

Here

Here then ſettled *Thomas* and *Jenny Meadows*; they lived happily for many years, and were much eſteemed and reſpected by their neighbours: the ſchools flouriſhed exceedingly under their direction, not only the children improved in learning, but what was infinitely of more conſequence, they improved in their morals and behaviour. *Thomas* uſed frequently to ſay, that the end of learning was to teach us our duty as men and as chriſtians, and when once we were taught in what that duty conſiſted, we had no pretence for not practiſing it. He was himſelf a pattern of ſobriety, honeſty, and diligence, therefore was he well calculated to inculcate theſe qualities, for though precept may do *much*, example will undoubtedly do *more*. *Jenny* was no leſs attentive to the girls under her care, by whom ſhe was much beloved

beloved for the gentleneſs and cheerfulneſs with which ſhe inſtructed them.

Theſe worthy people lived to ſee their children and grand-children grow up. Let us learn from their example the ſuperior advantages attending a virtuous conduct; from the integrity of their character the ſurgeon firſt recommended them to the notice of Mr. *Mildmay*. Previous to his appearance, they had ſtruggled hard with adverſity. Their firm reliance on a merciful Providence taught them to yield ſubmiſſively to their reverſe of fortune; they felt unhappineſs, but they were not overcome by it, ſince none but the wicked, who feel conſcious they bring on their diſtreſs by their own miſconduct, can be ſaid to be completely wretched.

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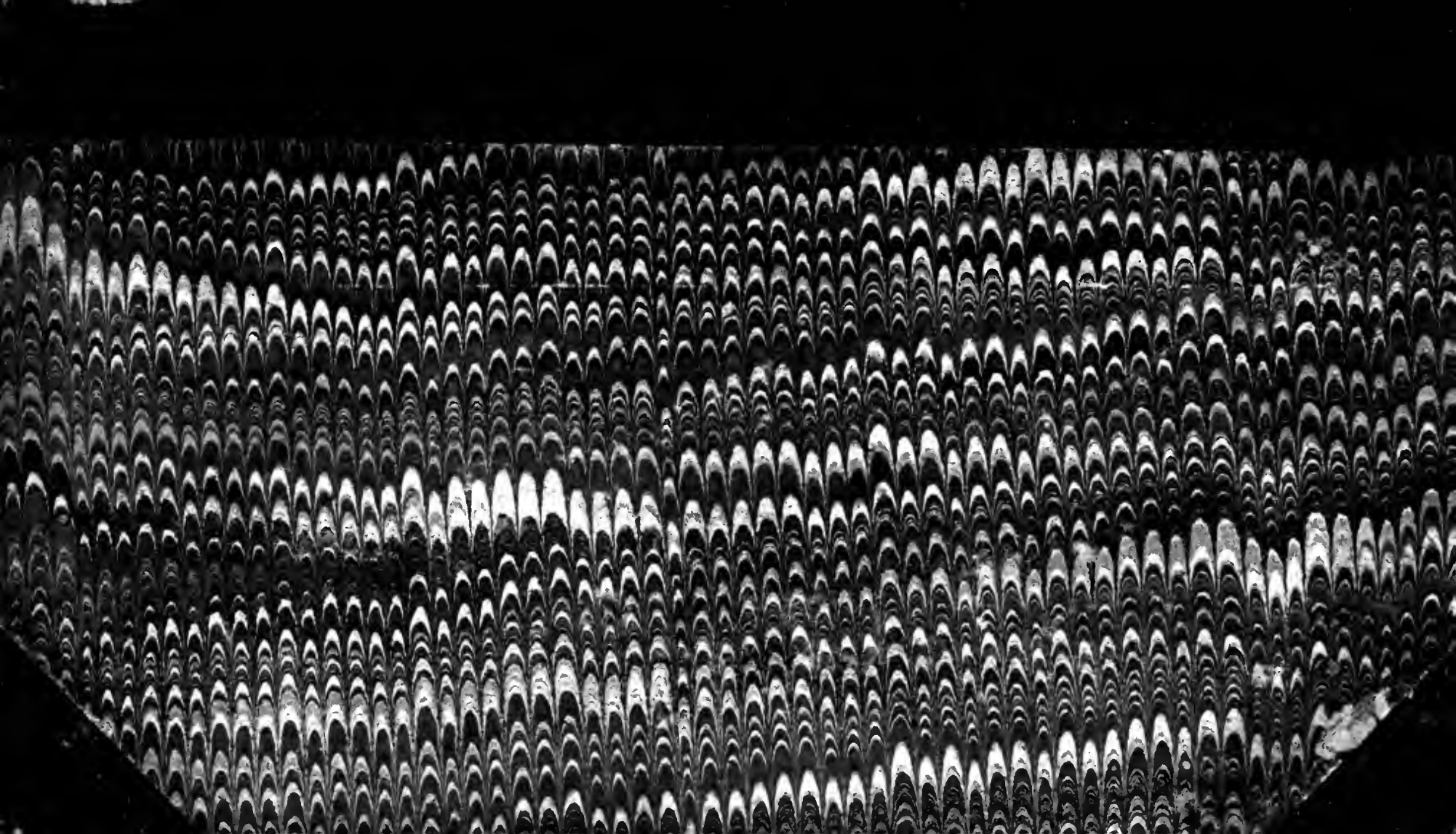
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